

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A shipping system for the facilitated packing and transportation of items, wherein the items are of a type requiring separation between vertically stacked layers, the shipping system comprising:

at least one shipping unit, each shipping unit further comprising:

at least ~~one~~ two substantially open-topped shipping ~~tray~~ trays, wherein each ~~of said~~ shipping trays is operably configured to be capable of being stacked atop ~~at least one other shipping tray~~ another of the at least two trays;

each tray having a top, two opposing sides and a bottom;

a cover, operably configured to be positioned atop the uppermost one of said at least ~~one~~ two substantially open-topped shipping ~~tray~~ trays of the at least one shipping unit; and

at least one binding member, operably configured to hold the cover atop the uppermost substantially open-topped shipping tray of the at least one shipping unit, by extending across the top, down the sides and across the bottom of a plurality of stacked articles,

wherein each substantially open-topped shipping tray of said at least two substantially open-topped shipping trays ~~within said at least one shipping unit~~ has a substantially the same top plan configuration ~~as each of said at least one other substantially open-topped shipping tray,~~ and the cover has a top plan configuration substantially the same as each of said at least two substantially open-topped shipping trays ~~at least one substantially open-topped shipping tray.~~

2. (Original) The shipping system according to claim 1, wherein at least one shipping tray is fabricated from corrugated paperboard material.
3. (Original) The shipping system according to claim 1, wherein at least one cover is fabricated from corrugated paperboard material.
4. (Original) The shipping system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one shipping unit includes at least two trays, and at least one of the trays includes stacking tabs, and the other of the at least two trays includes apertures for receiving the stacking tabs of the other of the at least two trays.
5. (Original) The shipping system according to claim 1, wherein the cover comprises a substantially planar pad.
6. (Original) The shipping system according to claim 5, wherein the pad is configured to accommodate stacking tabs extending upwardly from an uppermost substantially open-topped tray of the shipping unit.
7. (Original) The shipping system according to claim 1, wherein the cover has a shoe box type lid configuration.
8. (Original) The shipping system according to claim 7, wherein the shoe box type lid configuration is configured to accommodate stacking tabs extending upwardly from an uppermost substantially open-topped tray of the shipping unit.
9. (Original) The shipping system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one binding member comprises at least one substantially thin, flat band encircling the at least one substantially open-topped tray and the cover.

10. (Original) The shipping system according to claim 9, wherein the at least one band is fabricated from paper material.

11 (Original). The shipping system according to claim 9, wherein the at least one band is fabricated from plastic material.

12. (Original) The shipping system according to claim 9, wherein the at least one band is a metal strap.

13. (Original) The shipping system according to claim 1, wherein the shipping unit comprises at least two non-identical substantially open-topped trays, having substantially similar top plan configurations.

14. (Original) The shipping system according to claim 1, wherein at least one shipping tray is fabricated from plastic material.

15. (Original) The shipping system according to claim 1, wherein at least one cover is fabricated from plastic material.

16. (Original) The shipping system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one binding member comprises:

at least one strip of adhesive tape material, simultaneously engaging a top surface of the cover and a bottom surface of a bottom-most one of the at least one substantially-open-topped shipping tray.